

## A VERY-LIKE STORY.

Once on a very long-ago time, oh! best-beloved, there dwelt a man. He lived in Kent; and he ate fishes, and berries, and beasts, and aunts, at least all aunts who were not really-truly aunts. But this was in the centuries-ago time, long before the wormy-germy 'demic and 'lectric light. He lived in a cave—a deep, damp, desolate den—and he had twenty-two daughters. And he was not a happy man. To look after him there was a gaunt, grim, 'posing-looking aunt, and she was a really-truly aunt, and she looked after her nieces too. She had most beautiful hair you ever saw, all done up in balls and buns, and curls and coifs, and wiggly-waggly spirals, and rippling ringlets, and feathers and flint-pins, just like so :

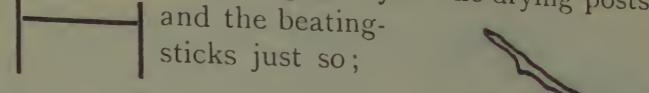


and no one knew how she did it, for she always went by her lonely but most romantic self into the shifty-shafty shadows of the great big cave to coil her 'squisite locks.

Now one day when the father (and his name, best-beloved, was Mothcatafritalita, but he was called Moth, for short) had gone bounder hunting, the aunt (she was a really-truly aunt, and she had many, many

'nominations, but was called Tabbi for short), called her really-truly nieces, the Moths (but their quite proper and respectable name was Mothcatafritalantara), and said: "O girls who care for rompy, rangly recreations more than simple, saintly, such-like studies (Tabbi always said this), do you not optically observe the burnished brightness of the blazing sun? (She always spoke like this.) Propel your feet to the

joyful meadow, and dry bounder skins for your equinoctial garments. I will coif my 'squisite and wavey-whirley hair." So her really-truly respecting nieces went out singing "Tabbi's got a hump," for that was their favouritest song. Then each beat a great spotless 'maculate bounder skin upon the ground and hung it up to dry. The drying posts were just so; | | and the beating-sticks just so;



You see they were hooked at the end to lift up the skins. Now the youngest daughter was a nice, naughty, higgly-giggly girl, and her really-truly aunt often spanked her with her hard, hard slipper. She went off by her lonely but very interesting self through the wild woods, and suddenly saw in the shifty-shafty shadows of a deep, damp cave her really-truly aunt coifing herself! And she saw how it was done! Her hair was twirly-twisted round a small, smooth, bulbous block of wood. One bulbous block did the higgly-giggly girl (and her name was Juggins) pick up, and ran 'riffically back to her other burden-busy sisters. As she ran up she sang, "This is how Tabbi coifs her hair, coifs her hair, coifs her hair," and threw the bulbous block into the middle of the field. And because it belonged to her really-truly romantic aunt who had that morning spanked her with her hard, hard slipper (don't forget it was hard, best-beloved), the seventeenth sister whom the bulbous block had hit, struck it with her curved and crooky beating stick, and all the other sisters struck it with their curved and crooky beating sticks, for their really-truly romantic aunt (don't forget she was really-truly 'mantic), had spanked them all with her hard, hard slipper that very morning, as soon as the Moth had gone bounder hunting. And after a time one-half of the now recklessly-romping maidens (and that is eleven of them you know), tried to hit the bulbous block with their curved and crooky beating sticks through one high and 'mendous drying post, and the other half (that is eleven, you know), tried to hit it through the other equally high and 'mendous drying post. And it was fun; I cannot tell how much fun, for they wont let me play, best-beloved. And while they were recklessly romping, their really-truly aunt (whom they called Tabbi), found them, and then the fun ceased. And after it was over, the higgly-giggly (but now she was no

longer so) Juggins went away by her lonely but very interesting self into the wild, wet woods. And wishing to warn all higgly-giggly gamesome girls in future she scratched her story on a piece of stone, just like this:—



She scratched a high and 'mendous drying post, and the bulbous block, and two crooked, curvy beating sticks, and her really-truly aunt (whom they called Tabbi), you can tell her by her 'squisite coif, in one hand she held up a hard, hard slipper (and it *was* hard, b.-b.), and in the other a stick pointing to the bulbous block. And she drew herself (who was called Juggins), both kneeling and asking forgiveness and after it was over. Only she could not draw very well. And this was the first game of hockey.

## THE READING OF BIOGRAPHIES.

Once upon a time there lived a man who boldly said that Biography was his "favourite form of fiction." A solid writer has remarked that "History is the essence of innumerable biographies." Would it be logical to work out a syllogism thus, "Therefore history is a favourite form of fiction?" Most of us like to read the records of the lives of others; perhaps it flatters our vanity, for "lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime," and many a life-weary Caponsacchi draws close the tattered gown of their own circumstances, and breathes "Thus would I fight, rule, save the world," before they awake to the "old solitary nothingness."

Perhaps one of the charms of reading an autobiography is the knowledge that our standard of truthfulness must certainly equal if not excel the author's, and that our own experiences might prove equally interesting if presented in the same guise!

There are two great schools of biography—patient research leading to the presentation of some very familiar historical personality in a new light, and thereby illuminating the darkness of some bygone age; and biography which is really only an expanded obituary notice, like Sydney Lee's recent "Life of Queen Victoria," or the long-expected but not yet arrived "Life of Gladstone," which John Morley has promised us.

The first school has two sub-divisions—one class aims at the discovery of the truth, the other to prove that the author's conception of the character is justified.

For example, Andrew Lang's "Mystery of Mary Stuart," though not avowedly biography, is an attempt to elucidate sundry very obscure passages in her life, and it leaves us with a totally different conception of her circumstances and her character than that to which tradition had accustomed us. Far from being the beloved and bewitching woman who had the world at her feet, poor Mary appears in the